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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of:) Attorney Docket No.: F-113

Venkata Katikaneni, et al.) Group Art Unit:

Serial No.:) Examiner:

Filed: Concurrently herewith) Date: April 3, 2001

RECEIVED
APR 6 2001
Group 2100

Title: MAILING SYSTEM HAVING FLEXIBLE PRINTING OF MESSAGES

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

In order to amend the above identified application, attached are:

1.) A clean version of the following replacement paragraphs:

Page 1, paragraph 1;

Page 6, paragraph 3;

Page 8, paragraph 2;

Page 12, paragraph 1;

Page 13, paragraph 2;

Page 13, paragraph 3;

Page 14, paragraph 1;

A set of new Claims 13-37.

2.) Appropriate Remarks; and

3.) A version with markings to show the changes made.

In the Specification:

On Page 1, please replace the first paragraph with the following paragraph:

This application is related to the following co-pending applications filed on December 30 1998 and commonly assigned to the assignee of this application: US Patent Application Number 09/224,256, entitled POSTAGE PRINTING SYSTEM HAVING SUBSIDIZED PRINTING OF THIRD PARTY MESSAGES (Attorney Docket No. E-796) now issued as US Patent No. 6,141,654); US Patent Application Number 09/223,504, entitled POSTAGE PRINTING SYSTEM HAVING VARIABLE SUBSIDIES FOR PRINTING OF THIRD PARTY MESSAGES (Attorney Docket No. E-803) now issued as US Patent No. 6,154,733 and US Patent Application Number 09/223,643, entitled PRODUCTION MAIL SYSTEM HAVING SUBSIDIES FOR PRINTING OF THIRD PARTY MESSAGES ON MAILPIECES (Attorney Docket No. E-806) now issued as US Patent No. 6,173,274, all of which are specifically incorporated herein by reference.

On Page 6, please replace the third paragraph with the following paragraph:

The micro control system 300 may be of any suitable combination of microprocessors, firmware and software. The micro control system 300 includes a motor controller 310 which is in operative communication with the motors 260 and 470, a printer controller 320 which is in operative communication with a printer module 100, a sensor controller 330 which is in operative communication with a sensor module 350 and a scanner module 550; an accounting module 340 for authorizing and accounting for the dispensing of postal funds; a microprocessor 360; and the user interface 380. The motor controller 310, the printer controller 320, the sensor controller 330, the accounting module 340 and other various components of the micro control system 300 are all in operative communication with each other over suitable communication lines. Generally, the microprocessor 360 coordinates the

operation and communications between the various modules of the postage printing system 10 and the components of the micro control system 300.

On Page 8, please replace the second paragraph with the following paragraph:

The postage printing system 10 further includes a sensor module 350 and a scanning module 550. The sensor module 350 is substantially in alignment with the nip of take-away rollers 450 for detecting the presence of the envelope 20. Preferably, the sensor module 350 is of any conventional optical type, which includes a light emitter 352 and a light detector 354. Generally, the light emitter 352 and the light detector 354 are located in an opposed relationship on opposite sides of the path of travel so that the envelope 20 passes therebetween. By measuring the amount of light that the light detector 354 receives, the presence or absence of the envelope 20 can be determined. Generally, by detecting the front running (furthest downstream) and lagging (furthest upstream) edges of the envelope 20, the sensor module 350 provides signals to the micro control system 300 which are used to determine the length of the envelope 20 and measure the gap between successive envelopes 20. Other purposes will be described in greater detail below.

On Page 12, please replace the first paragraph with the following paragraph:

Referring to Figs. 4A, 4B and 4C, an envelope 20 having an example of a postal indicia 30 printed thereon is shown. Items that are hidden from view are shown in phantom lines to facilitate understanding of the views. The envelope 20 includes a main body, having a front face 20F and a rear face 20R, and a flap 22. The postal indicia 30 is printed in the upper right hand corner of the envelope's front face 20F as required by most postal authorities. Furthermore, the envelope 20 has a plurality of edges, including a lead edge 20a, a top edge 20b, a trail edge 20c and a bottom edge 20d. In conventional fashion, the envelope 20 may include a sender or return address (not shown) in the upper left hand corner of the envelope's front face

20F and a recipient address (not shown) located somewhat centrally on the envelope's front face 20F.

On Page 13, please replace the second paragraph with the following paragraph:

With the structure of the postage printing system 10 described as above, the operational characteristics will now be described with respect to processing an envelope 20 where a postal indicia and an ad slogan 50 are printed thereon. Referring primarily to Fig. 5 while referencing the structure of Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B and 4C a flow chart of a control system algorithm 500 in accordance with the present invention is shown. The algorithm 500 may be executed by any suitable combination of software, firmware and hardware subsystems by the micro control system 300. At 502, the postage printing system 10 enters ad slogan printing mode in response to an appropriate input from the operator via the user interface 380. Next, at 504, the operator indicates a selected one of the plurality of print locations 40a-40f and 42a-42f for the ad slogan 50. This is most effectively accomplished by having the display 384 provide the operator with a graphical representation of the plurality of print locations 40a-40f and 42a-42f with respect to the postal indicia 30 and having the operator make a selection using the keypad 382.

On Page 13, please replace the third paragraph with the following paragraph:

Next, at 506, a determination is made if the selected print location is within the first set of front face print locations 40a-40c. If yes, then at 508, the postage printing system 10 informs the operator that only one pass through the postage printing system 10 is required and to commence feeding the envelope 20 when ready. Next, at 510, the envelope 20 is fed through the postage printing system 10 as described above. Next, at 512, the postal indicia 30 is printed on the envelope 20. Using the sensor module 350, the postage printing system 10 detects a front running edge (the edge further downstream in the path of travel) of the envelope 20. So as to print the

postal indicia 30, the front running edge is the lead edge 20a of the envelope 20. The postage printing system 10 via the micro control system 300 coordinates operation of the printer module 100 with the conveyor apparatus 200 so that the postal indicia 30 is properly printed in proximity to the lead edge 20a of the envelope 20. Next, at 514, the ad slogan 50 is printed on the envelope in the selected print location that is one of print locations 40a, 40b and 40c. For print location 40a, the postage printing system 10 commencing printing of the ad slogan 50 once printing of the postal indicia 30 is completed. For print locations 40b and 40c, the postage printing system 10 uses the sensor module 350 to detect the lead edge 20a (front running) and the trail edge 20c (lagging) of the envelope 20. From this information, the postage printing system 10 knows the length of the envelope 20 and can coordinate operation of the printer module 100 with the conveyor apparatus 200 accordingly so that the postal indicia 30 is properly printed in the selected location.

On Page 14, please replace the first paragraph with the following paragraph:

Next, at 506, a determination is made if the selected print location is within the first set of front face print locations 40a-40c. If yes, then at 508, the postage printing system 10 informs the operator that only one pass through the postage printing system 10 is required and to commence feeding the envelope 20 when ready. Next, at 510, the envelope 20 is fed through the postage printing system 10 as described above. Next, at 512, the postal indicia 30 is printed on the envelope 20. Using the sensor module 350, the postage printing system 10 detects a front running edge (the edge further downstream in the path of travel) of the envelope 20. So as to print the postal indicia 30, the front running edge is the lead edge 20a of the envelope 20. The postage printing system 10 via the micro control system 300 coordinates operation of the printer module 100 with the conveyor apparatus 200 so that the postal indicia 30 is properly printed in proximity to the lead edge 20a of the envelope 20. Next, at 514, the ad slogan 50 is printed on the envelope in the selected print location that is one of print locations 40a, 40b and 40c. For print location 40a, the postage printing system 10 commencing printing of the ad slogan 50 once printing of

the postal indicia 30 is completed. For print locations 40b and 40c, the postage printing system 10 uses the sensor module 500 to detect the lead edge 20a (front running) and the trail edge 20c (lagging) of the envelope 20. From this information, the postage printing system 10 knows the length of the envelope 20 and can coordinate operation of the printer module 100 with the conveyor apparatus 200 accordingly so that the postal indicia 30 is properly printed in the selected location.

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11E. On Page 15, please replace the first paragraph with the following paragraph:

On the other hand, if at 506 the answer is no, then at 520 the postage printing system 10 informs the operator via the user interface 380 that two (2) passes through the postage printing system 10 are required and that postage printing will occur first. Next, at 522, the operator feeds the envelope 20 through the postage printing system 10 as described above. Next, at 524, the postal indicia 30 is printed on the envelope 20 in proximity to the lead edge 20a of the envelope 20 as described above. Next, at 526, the postage printing system 10 prompts the operation via the user interface 380 to feed the envelope 20 one more time. Preferably, to assist in avoiding operator error, the display 384 provides the operator with a graphical representation of the orientation at which the envelope 20 should be fed so as to be able to comply with the printing the ad slogan 50 at the selected location. For example, the graphical representation may include the registration wall, an arrow indicating the direction of the path of travel, and an envelope having the postal indicia 30 shown thereon. If the front face 20F of the envelope 20 is to be fed facing up, then the flap 22 is not shown. On the other hand, if the rear face 20R of the envelope is to be fed facing up, then the flap 22 is shown and the postal indicia 30 may be shown in phantom or dim lines. Next, at 528, the envelope 20 is fed in the path of travel past the sensor module 350 and the scanner module 550. As describe above, the sensor module 350 detects the

front running edge (which may be either the lead edge 20a or the trail edge 20c depending upon the orientation at which the envelope 20 was fed) of the envelope 20. Next, at 530, the scanner module 550 activates the first scanner 552 and a second scanner 554 to detect the postal indicia 30. Next, at 532, the postage printing system 10 determines the feed orientation of the envelope 20. This is achieved by the following. Whether the postal indicia 30 is detected by the first scanner 552 or the second scanner 554 informs the postage printing system 10 whether the envelope 20 was fed with the front face 20F up or down. Also, using the detected position of the postal indicia 30 with respect to the front running edge of the envelope 20 informs the postage printing system 10 whether the lead edge 20a or the trail edge 20c is further down stream. Thus, the postage printing system 10 may determine the fed orientation of the envelope 20. Next, at 534, a determination is made whether or not the feed orientation corresponds to an anticipated orientation that is based upon the selected print location for the ad slogan. If yes, then at 536 the ad slogan 50 is printed on the envelope 20, using analogous techniques to those described above, in the selected print location that is one of print locations 40d, 40e, 40f, 42a, 42b, 42c, 42d, 42e and 42f based upon the input from the operation. For print locations 40d, 40e, 40f, 42d, 42e and 42f, the envelope 20 is fed so that the bottom edge 20d is aligned with the registration wall 12. As a result, the graphics associated with the ad slogan 50 will be printed upside down so that when the envelope 20 is viewed by the intended recipient, the ad slogan in these positions will appear right side up.

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claim 1.

Please insert the following new claims:

13. A postage printing system, comprising:

a registration wall;

a transport device for feeding an envelope having a plurality of lateral edges in a path of travel through the postage printing system where one of the plurality of lateral edges is aligned with the registration wall;

a printer capable of printing a postal indicia and an ad slogan on the envelope, the printer being located in proximity to the path of travel so as to define a print position;

a control system in operative communication with the transport device and the printer, the control system for:

obtaining an indication from an operator of a selected print location for the ad slogan; and

determining if the postal indicia and the ad slogan may be printed in a single pass of the envelope through the print position of the postage printing system.

14. The postage printing system of claim 13, wherein:

if the control system determines that the postal indicia and the ad slogan cannot be printed in a single pass through the postage printing system, then the postal indicia is printed in one pass through the postage printing system and the ad slogan is printed in another pass through the postage printing system.

15. The postage printing system of claim 14, wherein:

before the another pass through the postage printing system, the control system provides the operator with an indication of an anticipated orientation of feeding the envelope through the postage printing system based upon the selected print location.

16. The postage printing system of claim 15, further comprising:
a scanner for detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and
wherein:
during the another pass, the control system is further for:
using the distinguishing characteristic to determine a fed orientation of the envelope;
comparing the fed orientation with the anticipated orientation; and
bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

17. The postage printing system of claim 16, wherein:
the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and
the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

18. The postage printing system of claim 17, wherein:
the postal indicia is printed along a top edge of the envelope; and
if the selected print location is along a bottom edge of the envelope, then the control system prints the ad slogan upside down so that the postal indicia and the ad slogan both read right side up when the envelope is viewed properly.

19. The postage printing system of claim 14, further comprising:
a scanner for detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and
wherein:
during the another pass, the control system is further for:

using the distinguishing characteristic to determine a fed orientation of the envelope;

comparing the fed orientation with an anticipated orientation; and

bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

20. The postage printing system of claim 19, wherein:

the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and

the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

21. A postage printing system, comprising:

a registration wall;

a transport device for feeding an envelope having a plurality of lateral edges in a path of travel through the postage printing system where one of the plurality of lateral edges is aligned with the registration wall;

a printer capable of printing a postal indicia and an ad slogan on the envelope, the printer being located in proximity to the path of travel so as to define a print position;

a control system in operative communication with the transport device and the printer, the control system for:

causing the postal indicia to be printed in one pass through the postage printing system and the ad slogan to be printed in another pass through the postage printing system; and

before the another pass through the postage printing system, providing the operator with an indication of an anticipated orientation of feeding the envelope through the postage printing system based upon a selected print location.

22. The postage printing system of claim 21, further comprising:

a scanner for detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and

wherein:

during the another pass, the control system is further for:

using the distinguishing characteristic to determine a fed orientation of the envelope;

comparing the fed orientation with the anticipated orientation; and

bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

23. The postage printing system of claim 22, wherein:

the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and

the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

24. The postage printing system of claim 23, wherein:

the postal indicia is printed along a top edge of the envelope; and

if the selected print location is along a bottom edge of the envelope, then the control system prints the ad slogan upside down so that the postal indicia and the ad slogan both read right side up when the envelope is viewed properly.

25. A method of operating a postage printing system, the method comprising the step(s) of:

feeding an envelope having a plurality of lateral edges in a path of travel through the postage printing system and along a registration wall where one of the plurality of lateral edges is aligned with the registration wall;

defining a print position where a postal indicia and an ad slogan may be printed on the envelope;

obtaining an indication from an operator of a selected print location for the ad slogan; and

determining if the postal indicia and the ad slogan may be printed in a single pass through the print position of the postage printing system.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein:

if the postal indicia and the ad slogan cannot be printed in a single pass through the postage printing system, then the postal indicia is printed in one pass through the postage printing system and the ad slogan is printed in another pass through the postage printing system.

27. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step(s) of:
before the another pass through the postage printing system, providing the operator with an indication of an anticipated orientation of feeding the envelope through the postage printing system based upon the selected print location.

28. The method of claim 27, further comprising the step(s) of:
detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and
during the another pass:
determining a fed orientation of the envelope based on detecting the distinguishing characteristic;
comparing the fed orientation with the anticipated orientation; and
bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein:
the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and
the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein:
the postal indicia is printed along a top edge of the envelope; and
further comprising the step(s) of:
if the selected print location is along a bottom edge of the envelope, printing the ad slogan upside down so that the postal indicia and the ad slogan both read right side up when the envelope is viewed properly.

31. The method of claim 26, further comprising the step(s) of:

detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and

during the another pass:

determining a fed orientation of the envelope based on detecting the distinguishing characteristic;

comparing the fed orientation with an anticipated orientation; and

bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein:

the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and

the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein:

the postal indicia is printed along a top edge of the envelope; and

further comprising the step(s) of:

if the selected print location is along a bottom edge of the envelope, printing the ad slogan upside down so that the postal indicia and the ad slogan both read right side up when the envelope is viewed properly.

34. A method of operating a postage printing system, the method comprising the step(s) of:

feeding an envelope having a plurality of lateral edges in a path of travel through the postage printing system and along a registration wall where one of the plurality of lateral edges is aligned with the registration wall;

defining a print position where a postal indicia and an ad slogan may be printed on the envelope;

causing the postal indicia to be printed in one pass through the postage printing system and the ad slogan to be printed in another pass through the postage printing system; and

before the another pass through the postage printing system, providing the operator with an indication of an anticipated orientation of feeding the envelope through the postage printing system based upon a selected print location.

35. The method of claim 34, further comprising the step(s) of:
detecting a distinguishing characteristic of the envelope; and
during the another pass:
determining a fed orientation of the envelope based on detecting the distinguishing characteristic;
comparing the fed orientation with the anticipated orientation; and
bypassing printing of the ad slogan if the fed orientation and the anticipated orientation do not correspond.

36. The method of claim 35, wherein:
the one pass occurs prior to the another pass; and
the distinguishing characteristic of the envelope is the postal indicia.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein:
the postal indicia is printed along a top edge of the envelope; and
further comprising the step(s) of:
if the selected print location is along a bottom edge of the envelope, printing the ad slogan upside down so that the postal indicia and the ad slogan both read right side up when the envelope is viewed properly.

Remarks

This Preliminary Amendment, including the concurrently field Proposed Amendment to Drawings, is submitted to address issues raised by the Examiner in the prior application and insert new claims.

Entry of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Angelo N. Chaclas
Reg. No. 39,134
Attorney of Record
Telephone (203) 924-3844

PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and
Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000

Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

In the specification:

On Page 1, paragraph 1, line 8, after "(Attorney Docket No. E-796)" insert --now issued as US Patent No. 6,141,654;

On Page 1, paragraph 1, line 11, after "Docket No. E-803)" insert --now issued as US Patent No. 6,154,733--;

On Page 1, paragraph 1, line 13, after (Attorney Docket No. E-806)" inserter --now issued as US Patent No. 6,173,274--.

On Page 6, paragraph 3, line 28, delete [500] and insert --350--.

On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 11, delete [500] and insert --350--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 12, delete [500] and insert --350--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 13, delete [500] and insert --350--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 15, delete [502] and insert --352--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 15, delete [504] and insert --354--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 16, delete [502] and insert --352--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 16, delete [504] and insert --354--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 19, delete [504] and insert --354--;
On Page 8, paragraph 2, line 22, delete [500] and insert --350--;

On Page 12, paragraph 1, line 1, after "4A" insert --,4B--;
On Page 12, paragraph 1, line 1, after "and" delete [4B] and insert --4C--.

On Page 13, paragraph 2, line 12, delete [50] and insert --500--;

On Page 13, paragraph 3, line 28, delete [500] and insert --350--.

On Page 14, paragraph 1, line 10, delete [500] and insert --350--.

On Page 15, paragraph 1, line 3, delete [500] and insert --350--;

On Page 15, paragraph 1, line 4, after "module" insert --350--.

#13

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re patent application of:)

Venkata Katikaneni, et al.) Attorney Docket No.: F-113

Serial No.:) Group Art Unit:

Filed: Concurrently herewith) Date: April 3, 2001

Title: MAILING SYSTEM HAVING FLEXIBLE PRINTING OF MESSAGES

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO DRAWINGS

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

S I R: **Attention: Drawings Review Branch**

At the Examiner's request, drawing corrections were required in prior application serial number 09/470,611 filed on December 22, 1999. Therefore, corresponding corrections are being made in this application. Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.123 and in conformance with MPEP 608.02(r), proposed drawings changes are herewith submitted under separate cover from the concurrently filed Preliminary Amendment.

To facilitate identification of the proposed drawing changes, any additions to the drawings appear in red ink and any deletions to the drawings are indicated by an "X" in red ink. Permission to amend the drawings as indicated is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Angelo N. Chaclas
Reg. No. 39,134
Attorney of Record
Telephone (203) 924-3844

PITNEY BOWES INC.
Intellectual Property and
Technology Law Department
35 Waterview Drive
P.O. Box 3000
Shelton, CT 06484-8000

FIG. 2